

**Conservation Area Study Session
Planning Commission
August 14, 2002**

Commissioners Present: Bob Levy, Jay James, Bob Dhillon, James Zito, John Zamora

Courtney Damkroger gave an overview of the current proposal. Commissioners had the following questions and comments:

Staff described the permit processes for historic districts and conservation areas, stating that HP permits are required for exterior changes in districts and Single Family House Permits in conservation areas. Staff also stated that, depending on the project, Single Family House permits may be required for work in residential historic districts.

When nominating a conservation area would the proposed 51% property owner consent requirement apply to those voting or 51% of the property owners in the area? Staff responded that according to the ordinance, 51% of the property owners.

Commissioners asked about the process to initiate a conservation area designation. Would such a request go to HLC? What if it a request were made to Planning Commission? Staff responded that PC can nominate an area, but that Planning Staff would be responsible for ensuring the completeness of the application. PC could refer a request for a nomination to the HLC.

It was observed that neighborhoods interested in conservation area designation that are not able to gather 51% property owner consent could request nomination by HLC, PC or City Council.

If a homeowner is within an area designated as a conservation area and did not support the designation are they still subject to the regulations? Planning staff responded that they would be.

There was discussion regarding the difference between an historic district and conservation area. It was noted that a conservation area does not necessarily have to be historic whereas historic districts do have to demonstrate historic significance. Commissioners also asked if conservation areas could be commercial. Staff responded that the proposal would allow for that.

Commissioners asked about the benefits of being in a conservation area. Staff responded that the State Historic Building Code applies (which provides for life safety) and that many in the community seem to be interested in the program to protect neighborhood character through some level of design review. Staff stated that outside of the SNI program there are not currently any funding programs for conservation areas or historic districts.

A letter from the Campus Community Association regarding the conservation area study was handed out by staff at the start of the Study Session. Commissioners asked about the

design review concerns raised in the letter. Staff responded that more education is needed on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and handed out an example of a new addition to an existing building that meets the Standards and is compatible.

Commissioners reconfirmed their interest in having conservation area designation recorded on property records so that it would appear in a title search.